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RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 000833

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA
DOE FOR GEORGE PERSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/05/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN PRESIDENT HOME, KEEPING LOW PROFILE

REF: ABUJA 763 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Heather Merritt for reasons 1
.4. (b & d).

¶1. (C) President Yar'Adua has been keeping a low public profile since he returned to Nigeria April 25 after medical treatment in Wiesbaden, Germany, although he is maintaining a Villa work schedule with his ministers. Few people seem to have first hand information about the president's health. His only widely publicized appearances since returning from Germany were on April 28 when he and former head of state Yakubu Gowon were photographed at the Villa with Michael Fennel, the visiting President of the Commonwealth Games Federation, and April 29, when he was shown briefly in television footage meeting with governors regarding the global food crisis. Yar'Adua did not appear at the May 1 Worker's Day celebration at the famed Eagle's Square in Abuja, which he had been scheduled to attend.

¶2. (C) The Ambassador has had several recent conversations about the President's health with the National Security Adviser (NSA) General Mukhtar, Speaker of the House of Representatives Dimeji Bankole, one of the President's physicians, and most recently with the President's close personal friend and confidant Agriculture Minister Ruma. According to Mukhtar, Bankole and Ruma, Yar'Adua is still a bit weak but is "certainly in charge" of the country. They maintained that Yar'Adua presided over a government leadership meeting on April 26, which included National Assembly leadership, the NSA, and other senior officials. In a meeting April 28, Speaker Bankole told the Ambassador that Yar'Adua had not become ill due to a missed session of dialysis (as some have speculated), but instead that on the evening of April 10, his physician "gave him the wrong medicine," which nearly killed him. Bankole was very angry that the President's own physician could make such a serious mistake. (Note: According to Bankole, the President takes a series of pills each day. He did not specify what pills or for what illness. End Note.)

¶3. (C) After a May 5 meeting about food security at the Ministry of Agriculture, Ambassador had a private pull-aside with Minister of Agriculture and Yar'Adua close personal friend and confidant Sayyadi Ruma. Ruma told the Ambassador that President Yar'Adua suffered an allergic reaction to a medication which precipitated his April 10 illness and subsequent trip to Germany for treatment. He assured the Ambassador that the President is doing much better now and

that he has returned to normal Villa duties, chairing a May 5 meeting on food price increases. Ruma also noted that Yar'Adua would hold the normal cabinet meeting on Wednesday May 7. Ruma claimed that the President still plays squash and is "stronger than people give him credit for." He offered to set up a meeting for the Ambassador with President Yar'Adua at any time, "even today" if she wished to see for herself how healthy he is.

14. (C) COMMENT: According to Agricultural Minister Ruma, Yar'Adua has had "a syndrome" (we assume this reference is to Churgg Strauss) for many years, underlying his kidney ailment. However, information about Yar'Adua's true medical condition is very tightly held, and those sources who have been forthcoming may only be telling us what they want us to hear. Post will of course continue to follow this issue closely and report on the President's health. We are also looking at reports of what a syndrome like Churgg Strauss manifests; things like kidney ailments, other major organ issues, and skin discoloration are reportedly some of its major symptoms. In the end, what we can confirm is that the President is up and about, limiting his public appearances, is back at work only at the Villa, and continues to battle major health issues displaying a variety of symptoms, including serious kidney problems. END COMMENT.
SANDERS